

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EA-06

IO-10 AID-05 OMB-01 EB-07 ACDA-05 /088 W

----- 051217

R 080815Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 385

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK

SUBJECT: BHUTTO'S SPEECHES AT SHEIKHUPURA AND LAHORE

REF: LAHORE 406

SUMMARY: IN LAST TWO SPEECHES OF HIS TOUR OF LAHORE DIVISION, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO REPEATED GOP DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY THEMES DEVELOPED IN EARLIER APPEARANCES ON TOUR. HE AGAIN ATTACKED DOMESTIC OPPOSITION AND GOVERNMENTS OF AFGHANISTAN AND INDIA, AND DECLARED GOP POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA "CORRECT," UNLIKE THAT OF USG. HE ALSO CLAIMED GOP POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST HAD BEEN "RIGHT" AS IT STRENGTHENED PAKISTAN'S POSITION PRESUMABLY BECAUSE IT HAS BROUGHT IN CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE). HE ONCE AGAIN REVIEWED POLITICAL EVENTS OF 1971 AND CASTIGATED SEVERAL OPPOSITION LEADERS BY NAME FOR THEIR ROLES. SPEECHES BY AND LARGE DREW LACKLUSTER RESPONSE FROM RELATIVELY LARGE BUT INATTENTIVE AND UNENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS. END SUMMARY.

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1. SPEAKING AT SHEIKHUPURA ON APRIL 5, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO

DECLARED THAT GOP SUPPORT FOR KASHMIRIS' RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION DID NOT AMOUNT TO INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF INDIA BECAUSE GOP DID NOT ACCEPT GOI POSITION THAT JAMMU AND KASHMIR WERE PART OF INDIA. HE CHARGED THAT OPPOSITION "PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN" TO EFFECT THAT HE HAD REACHED "SECRET DEAL" WITH MRS. GANDHI AT SIMLA WAS "TOTAL LIE." GOP AND GOI HAD ARRIVED AT NO AGREEMENT ON KASHMIR AT SIMLA.

2. AT LAHORE ON APRIL 6, PRIME MINISTER REITERATED MUCH OF WHAT HE HAD SAID INTERNATIONALLY AND DOMESTICALLY IN PREVIOUS SPEECHES DURING "GRAND TOUR" OF PUNJAB. ONCE AGAIN HE CONDEMNED "HOSTILITY" OF AFGHANISTAN AND THREW BACK MRS. GHANDHI'S WORDS WITH CHARGE OF INDIAN "BELLICOSITY." HE ASSERTED THAT GOP WOULD CONTINUE "STRUGGLE AGAINST INDIA'S EXPANSIONIST POLICY" IN ORDER TO SAVE WHAT WAS LEFT OF PAKISTAN.

3. DURING LENGTHY DISCOURSE ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S "SOUND AND CORRECT FOREIGN POLICY," BHUTTO MENTIONED CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST. HE RECALLED HE HAD DISAGREED WITH VICE PRESIDENT JOHNSON IN 1962 AND WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY SHORTLY THEREAFTER OVER USG POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND HAD TOLD BOTH THAT US POLICY IN ASIA "WOULD NOT SUCCEED." HE OBSERVED THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAD SHOWN THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S RECOGNITION OF SIHANOUK'S GRUNK WAS "RIGHT." HE SAID GOP POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST HAD ALSO BEEN "CORRECT," AND MAINTAINED THAT GOP HAD "STRENGTHENED PAKISTAN'S POSITION" WITH ITS SOUND MIDDLE EAST POLICY.

4. PRIME MINISTER CALLED ON PEOPLE OF LAHORE TO FACE CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES WITH "FORTITUDE AND DETERMINATION." HE WARNED THAT MORE SACRIFICES WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE DURING NEXT FEW MONTHS BECAUSE GOP WOULD HAVE TO MAKE "ONE OR TWO" IMPORTANT DECISIONS TO STRENGTHEN NATION'S "DEFENSE POTENTIAL" AND CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ECONOMY. (ACCORDING TO GOP-CONTROLLED DAILY IMROZE, BHUTTO MENTIONED THIS NEED FOR DECISION ON PAK "DEFENSE POTENTIAL" IN CONTEXT OF REFERENCES TO INDIAN "PREPARATIONS FOR AGGRESSION," INCLUDING ASSERTION THAT GOI WAS IN PROCESS OF MAKING ATOMIC BOMB.)

5. BHUTTO ONCE AGAIN GAVE HIS VERSION OF HIS ROLE DURING 1971 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CRISIS, MAINTAINING THAT, HAD HE NOT OPPOSED SHEIKH MUJIB AND HIS SIX POINTS, PAKISTAN WOULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO "RUINATION." FOR THAT REASON, HE HAD DISSUADED PPP MNA'S FROM GOING TO DACCA TO ATTEND ASSEMBLY SESSION. TIME HAD PROVED HIS DECISION CORRECT, HE DECLARED.

6. BHUTTO REPEATED HIS ATTACKS AGAINST OPPOSITION AND "ANTI-PAKISTAN" ELEMENTS, DECLARING "I SHALL CHASE THEM TO JAIL. I

SHALL NOT SPARE THEM." IN THIS REGARD, HE REMINDED AUDIENCE GOP HAD BANNED "CONGRESS PARTY OF PAKISTAN" (READ NAP), AND REITERATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD RESPECT SUPREME COURT VERDICT ON NAP CASE. HE WENT TO SOME LENGTH TO CASTIGATE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF OPPOSITION, TELLING ADVERSE PERSONAL ANECDOTES ABOUT JUI LEADER MUFTI MAHMOOD AND TEHRIK-I-ISTIQALAL CHAIRMAN ASGHAR KHAN. IN PARTICULARLY POINTED REMARK, HE TERMED ASGHAR "STUPID" (CHOOTIA -- A VULGAR TERM IN URDU).

7. COMMENT: CROWDS ROUNDED-UP TO HEAR BHUTTO SPEECHES AT SHEIKHUPURA AND LAHORE WERE LARGE BUT GENERAL INATTENTIVE AND UNENTHUSIASTIC. WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE FIRST-HAND REPORT OF SHEIKHUPURA MEETING, CONSUL GENERAL AND FSL SEPARATELY WITNESSED LAHORE MEETING FROM THE CROWD AND OBSERVED THAT MOST OF PERHAPS 75,000 PEOPLE AT SCENE SPENT TIME MILLING ABOUT PERIPHERY UNRESPONSIVE TO THE PROCEEDINGS. MANY REMAINED IN OR ATOP SCORES OF BUSES WHICH HAD HAULED THOUSANDS FROM COUNTRYSIDE AND WERE PARKED OUT OF SIGHT AND SOUND. BHUTTO'S VOICE -- HIGH-PITCHED, HOARSE AND AGITATED -- DID NOT SEEM TO CARRY HIS POINTS ACROSS WELL. NUMEROUS STAGED INTERRUPTIONS WITH CRIES OF "WAZIR-E-AZAM ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO" OVER PA SYSTEM ELICITED ONLY SPARSE "ZINDABAD" RESPONSE, MOSTLY FROM FAITHFUL IN FRONT ROWS. THOUSANDS EVIDENTLY CAME ONLY TO SEE SPECTACLE OF ARRIVAL AND STREAMED BACK TO LAHORE CITY AS SPEECH BEGAN.

8. ALL IN ALL IT WAS PRETTY BLAND SHOW, DESPITE IMPRESSIONS OF FRONT-PAGE PRESS PHOTOS INDICATING MASSIVE TURNOUT (EARLY IN SPEECH AND AT LOW ANGLE). WE WONDER IF THIS MERELY REFLECTS POLITICAL ENNUI TYPICAL OF LAHORE OR CONFIRMS PERSISTENT REPORTS THAT BHUTTO'S PUNJAB TOUR HAS BEEN GENERALLY LACKLUSTER.

9. SUBSTANTIVELY, LAST TWO SPEECHES OF TOUR INCLUDED LITTLE NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED AND COMMENTED ON -- EXCEPT CRYPTIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REFERENCE TO NEED FOR DECISIONS TO STRENGTHEN NATION'S -DEFENSE POTENTIAL," PRECISE MEANING OF WHICH IS OBSCURE AND WE LEAVE FOR OTHERS TO INTERPRET.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PROPAGANDA, SPEECHES, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LAHORE00416
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750123-0212
From: LAHORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750472/aaaacntd.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LAHORE 406
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <29 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BHUTTO'S SPEECHES AT SHEIKHUPURA AND LAHORE
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK, (BHUTTO, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006